(e) SAIL is not getting any financial help from the Government. During 2008-09 the company made a profit (profit after tax) of Rs.6175 crore. However, some of its units namely - Alloy Steel Plant (ASP) Visvesvaraya Iron and Steel Plant (VISL) and IISCO Steel Plant (ISP) have incurred losses.

(f) SAIL is taking various steps to improve performance of ASP, VISL, and ISP. At ASP, SAIL has already implemented certain schemes which include installation of Argon Oxygen decarburization, replacement of Electric Arc Furnace and Oxygen plant on BOO basis. Further installation of 2nd ladle furnace is under consideration. At VISL, some schemes are under implementation such as installation of new Bloom caster and new Reheating furnace in primary mill. At ISP, SAIL has undertaken modernization & expansion to increase production of hot metal from 0.85 Mt to 2.91 Mt. SAIL has also undertaken modernization and expansion of its five integrated steel plants al Bhilai, Bokaro, Rourkela, Durgapur and IISCO Steel Plant and the Special Steel Plant at Salem. This will increase production of hot metal from base level of 14.6 million tonnes per annum (2006-07 actual) to 23.46 million tonne per annum under the current phase.

MoUs with States for mineral explorations

1635. SHRI SYED AZEEZ PASHA: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a number of steel companies have entered into Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with the State Governments for mineral explorations;

(b) if so, the details thereof company-wise and State-wise;

(c) the number of companies which have been granted mining leases, company-wise, State-wise and mineral-wise; and

(d) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by Government to ensure constant supply of raw minerals like iron ore to the newly established steel companies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI A. SAI PRATHAP): (a) and (b) A number of steel investors have entered into Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) for setting up of iron and steel plants in mineral rich states Jharkhand, Orissa and Chhattisgarh. The details of such proposal state-wise and project-wise are given in the Annexure (see Appendix 217 Annexure No. 14) as per the record of information available in the Ministry of Steel.

(c) The information is being collected from Ministry of Mines and concerned State Governments and will be laid on the table of the House.

(d) Government has approved National Mineral Policy, 2008, which inter-alia provides for preference to value adders in the allocation of captive mines of iron ore. Further, it may be stated that while considering National Mineral Policy, 2008, the Group of Ministers had decided that conservation of iron ore resources of the country is of paramount importance, however, the same

may not be achieved by banning or capping the export of iron ore but by taking recourse to appropriate fiscal measures. Accordingly, export duty at different rates was imposed on iron ore from time to time. At present, the rates of duty on iron ore export is following:-

(i) Iron ore fines-fall sorts)	-	Nil
(ii) Iron ore other than fines (including lumps & pellets)	-	5% ad-valorem

Setting up of processing plants by SAIL

†1636. SHRI MOTILAL VORA:
SHRI SATYAVRAT CHATURVEDI:
Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) when a decision to set up processing plant in some States had been taken by the Steel Authority of India;

(b) the present status of these processing plants and the plant-wise production capacity thereof; and

(c) by when production would be started in these plants?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI A. SAI PRATHAP): (a) The Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) has decided to install Steel Processing Units (SPU) at various locations of the country.

(b) and (c) The SPUs are proposed to be set up at Bettiah, Manar and Gaya in Bihar, Hosihangabad, Ujjain and Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh, Guwahati in Assam, Srinagar in Jammu and Kashmir, Lakhimpur in Uttar Pradesh and Kangra in Himachal Pradesh.

The SPU at Bettiah was accorded final approval by SAIL in July, 08. The pipe/tube mill is likely to have a production capacity of 50,000 tonne per annum (tpa) and the other operations proposed include: Corrugation of Galvanised sheets (20,000 tpa); Cut to length facilities for Galvanised coil (20,000 tpa); and Slitting Line for Hot Rolled Coil (60,000 tpa). The civil/structural works and supply of equipment for this SPU are in progress. The production at Bettiah is expected to commence in January, 2010.

National Joint Consultative Committee on Steel

†1637. SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) the present status of the National Joint Consultative Committee on Steel (N.J.C.C.S.);

(b) the number and the names of members of it;

(c) the procedure to set up this Committee;

(d) the number of meetings held till date and the decisions taken therein till date;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.